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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PM/PPA DONNA HOPKINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2019
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: GOA DOWNPLAYS MEDIA SPECULATION ON AUSTRALIAN ROLE
AGAINST SOMALI PIRACY

REF: STATE 126055

Classified By: Political Counselor James F. Cole for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Lee Kerr, Director, United Nations and Commonwealth Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, advised that media reports on redeployment of an Australian warship to the Horn of Africa for anti-piracy work were completely unfounded. She said the Department of Defence (ADOD) has not briefed the government on any redeployment recommendations and that ideas are still being discussed informally within ADOD. She suggested it was possible that the comments made by the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) came from those informal discussions. She stated that discussions thus far have been strictly internal to ADOD, that the USG is not involved in the discussions, and the USG has not asked for Australian participation in anti-piracy efforts through any channels.

12. (SBU) CDF Angus Houston, commented to the media that Australia is considering redeployment of the warship HMAS Paramatta from the Persian Gulf to either the Horn of Africa or the north Indian Ocean for anti-piracy work. An ADOD spokesperson and Defence Minister Fitzgibbon both indicated that no decision has been made on the ship's redeployment. Media reports also indicate that the U.S. has reportedly asked Australia to join Task Force 151. DM Fitzgibbon was misquoted to have said that the U.S. has requested the ship to be assigned to other tasks; his actual statement was that at the request of the U.S., Australian naval forces were to be reassigned to other maritime missions within the Gulf.

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